

Girl Scout must earn four interest project patches, the Career Exploration Pin, the Senior Girl Scout Leadership Award, and the Senior Girl Scout Challenge, as well as design and implement a Girl Scout Gold Award project. A plan for fulfilling these requirements is created by the Senior Girl Scout and is carried out through close cooperation between the girl and an adult Girl Scout volunteer.

Mr. President, I ask you and my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to these outstanding young ladies. They deserve recognition for their contributions to their community and their country, and I wish them continued success in the years ahead.

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK 1997

• Mr. SARBANES. Mr. President, as we mark the annual celebration of Small Business Week, I take great pleasure in acknowledging the achievements of the estimated 22.1 million small businesses in this country. Small businesses play an integral role in the American economy, generating half the gross domestic product, and driving America forward in terms of product development, employment, and ingenuity.

Small businesses employ more than 50 percent of our private work force and have been credited with the creation of two out of every three jobs. Studies have also shown that they produce more than twice as many significant innovations per employee as large firms. But beyond the statistics, the successes of small businesses continue to prove that the American dream is still a reality.

Small businesses provide most American workers with their first jobs. And for each job that a small business creates, one more American has the opportunity to prosper. Small businesses also play a major role in moving our economy forward, creating jobs, generating revenue, and developing new products and services that keep American business on the cutting edge.

In my own State of Maryland, we have seen the extraordinary things that can be accomplished when creative entrepreneurs are determined to succeed. I want to share just a few of those stories.

The 1997 Maryland Small Business Person of the year is Jamie Clark, who began his Internet service company, ClarkNet, out of a family barn in Ellicott City, MD. Jamie is deaf, and recognized the Internet as a powerful resource, a place where he and other deaf people could conduct business as easily as the hearing. With a \$35,000 loan and three volunteers, who were also deaf, Jamie built a company that today employs well over 30 people and had sales totaling \$2.5 million last year, up from less than \$60,000 when ClarkNet began just 4 years ago.

As someone with deep roots in Maryland—Jamie's grandfather was a circuit court judge in Howard County and his father a State senator for 24 years,

4 of those as president of the Senate—Jamie is an active member of the community, serving on the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Entrepreneurs Council, the Howard County Chamber of Commerce, the Better Business Bureau, and the Baltimore-Washington Venture Group.

Maryland's Small Business Exporter of the Year last year, Bruce Lawson of Finksburg, MD, has turned a hobby into a business that is an industry leader. Bruce started his company, Brass Instruments, after helping his father—a retired french horn player in the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra—repair his friends' musical instruments. Appalled at the quality of the horns they were repairing, Bruce started making horns himself. Today, Brass Instruments is the top french horn maker in the world.

Another former Maryland Small Business Person of the Year is Dorothy White, of Columbia, MD, who started cleaning houses when her husband fell ill. Dorothy's work was so impressive that her employers began asking her to clean their offices as well. What evolved was Dorothy's multimillion-dollar business, Miracle Services. Like many Maryland businesses, Dorothy's company also has flourished under the 8(a) program, through which she has received numerous Government contracts.

The 1995 Regional Small Business Exporter of the Year also hails from Maryland. After immigrating from Poland to Baltimore, Jon Sakowski realized that plastic piping could make all the difference in Poland's plumbing system. When he could not find a Polish buyer who could afford the product, Jon began installing the piping for free in Poland's churches, schools, and hospitals. Then, taking a major financial risk, Jon exported the piping to Poland—without a buyer—and warehoused it himself, selling the piping off piece by piece rather than in bulk.

We in Maryland are very proud of individuals like Jamie Clark, Bruce Lawson, Dorothy White, Jon Sakowski and the many other operators of small businesses in our State who, often beginning with very little, have accomplished so much. More than 97.8 percent of Maryland's full-time firms have fewer than 500 employees, and there are an additional 131,000 individuals who are self-employed. The significance of these businesses to Maryland's economy is evident in study after study, such as the Small Business Administration's recent report that Maryland firms with fewer than 20 employees increased employment by 10.4 percent between 1991 and 1995.

Minority-owned businesses also have made great strides in recent years. Between 1987 and 1992, Maryland's number of women-owned businesses rose by 48.7 percent, its number of African-American owned firms rose 65 percent and its number of Hispanic-owned firms rose 148.7 percent.

Yet despite this progress, much remains to be done. Minority-owned

firms in Maryland are selling 30 percent below the national average, and bankruptcies and failures have increased. Given the important economic and social roles played by minority-owned businesses, it is essential that we strengthen our efforts to help these underserved markets succeed.

Mr. President, as someone who has benefited personally from the opportunities afforded to small business in this country—I spent my youth working in my parents' Greek restaurant on Maryland's Lower Eastern Shore—I know how important it is to small business owners, employees, and customers that they continue to thrive. Small business success not only translates into jobs and economic growth, it also translates into a sense of pride and self-respect on the part of owners and workers and the heartening affirmation that the American dream is still alive.●

THE CONGRESSIONAL AWARD

• Mr. SANTORUM. Mr. President, in 1979, Congress created an award which is specifically designed for young people. This special program, the Congressional Award, recognizes young Americans who make commitments to community service and self-improvement. I would like to take a few moments of Senate business to discuss this program and the important role it plays in promoting volunteerism.

The Congressional Award is a non-partisan, public-private partnership which teaches young people that they can make a difference in their communities. The program is noncompetitive. Participants set individual goals based on their own abilities. Once these goals are achieved, they can earn bronze, silver, or gold medals. I would emphasize that each Congressional Award is earned—not won. Any 14- to 23-year-old, regardless of their life circumstances or physical and mental abilities, can earn the award.

Mr. President, this program truly promotes community service. Since the first award was presented in 1982, 1.5 million hours have been attributed to volunteerism. In the last 12 months alone, recipients of the Congressional Award throughout the country performed more than 63,000 hours of community service. Some examples of the volunteer projects include assisting elderly shut-ins, distributing food for the needy, producing a handbook of volunteer opportunities at the United Way, and donating a narcotics K-9 to a sheriff's department.

Recently, I have chartered the Congressional Award Program in my own State, along with the other members of the Pennsylvania delegation. I encourage each of my colleagues to promote this valuable program. The Congressional Award benefits everyone involved—the participants, their adult sponsors, and the communities at large. I would also note that while this program is a public-private partnership, it does not receive its funding